

Letters of Intent  
OSP Procedures Revised – May 19, 2025

**BACKGROUND:** A Letter of Intent, also called a White Paper, Pre-Proposal, Concept Paper, or Quad Chart (hereafter called LOI), is a shortened version of a complete grant proposal. Typically, Sponsors will request LOIs to allow them to assess whether or not there is a good match between the proposed project and their interests. Sometimes the Sponsor will offer the option of an LOI, but it will not be required or evaluated. Following submission of an LOI, the Sponsor will invite full proposals (except in some cases where the LOI is optional).

LOIs are primarily technical narratives; however, some Sponsors will request aggregate budget numbers or a detailed budget. Additionally, Sponsor requirements regarding submission will vary; some Sponsors require the Principal Investigator (PI) to submit the LOI while others require the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) to do so. In some cases, the Sponsor requires the PI to submit but requires a signed letter of intent by the AOR. Additionally, for federal LOIs that required AOR signatures or submission, the Department will initiate a Malign Foreign Talent Review Program (MFTRP) review, following the [MFTRP procedures](#).

Additionally, some sponsors impose limits on the number of LOIs that your institution can submit. In these cases, you will need to follow the internal application instructions if the opportunity has been posted to the Research Development (RD) listserv or posted on the limited submission deadline table located on the RD Services website. While RD makes every effort to identify all limited submissions opportunities and notify faculty, it is the responsibility of the faculty to contact [limited@gmu.edu](mailto:limited@gmu.edu) should a faculty member identify a limited submissions funding opportunity that she/he is interested in, but finds that it is not posted on the RD website. Faculty may not proceed with an LOI to a limited submission competition without notice of approval from RD.

**PROCEDURES:**

**1) Submission of LOIs**

Principal Investigators (PI) are encouraged to contact OSP (appropriate team manager) if they are unsure whether OSP involvement is required. OSP will advise on whether a RAMP record is needed and whether OSP will need to review and/or submit the LOI.

PIs must create a RAMP record when:

- a. the Sponsor requires, or the LOI contains, a detailed budget or the discussion of institutional commitments.
- b. the Sponsor requires an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) signature.
- c. There is a limit on the number of LOIs the institution may submit.
- d. A letter of support is required with the submission. An OSP Grants Administrator will prepare the letter of support and send to PI when signed.

OSP will need to review, submit and/or sign the LOI on behalf of the PI (institution) when:

- a. a detailed budget is required with the LOI.
- b. the Sponsor requires the signature of the Authorized Organizational Representative.
- c. the sponsor sets a limit on the number of LOIs for the institution.
- d. signing the LOI is a proxy for signing a full proposal (i.e. there wouldn't need to be a signature on a full proposal if invited to submit, the Sponsor uses the LOI signature.)

All federal LOIs submitted by OSP must have a MFTRP review conducted. The MFTRP review involves collecting biosketches and current and pending docs for all key personnel and sending these to ORIA for review. The reviews are initiated when the LOI is sent to OSP, typically four days before the Sponsor deadline.

For those LOI's submitted by OSP, OSP will also perform a limited review to flag for the College/School whether any of the following are included. If included, OSP will require confirmation from the Lead Unit designated official (Associate Dean for Research or Chief Business Officer) via email that they approve the LOI submission.

- a. Cost share
- b. Indirect cost deviation/waiver from approved rate
- c. Personnel effort
- d. Representations and Certifications (e.g., Intellectual Property, data sharing, etc.)

Additionally, if the LOI names subrecipients or collaborators, OSP strongly recommends obtaining letters of commitment from those institutions and submitting a copy to OSP to ensure there are no difficulties should the LOI be invited to submit a full proposal.

## **2) Successful LOIs (Invitation to Submit a Full Proposal)**

- a. If the PI receives notification from the Sponsor that they are invited to submit a full proposal, the PI must, within 48 hours, submit a Request for Proposal Assignment to OSP.
- b. OSP will assign a Grants Administrator to work with the PI on the full proposal. OSP will send PI initial email identifying assigned Grants Administrator.
- c. Upon receiving initial email from OSP, PI forwards the notification from Sponsor (invitation to apply, if applicable) and copy of submitted LOI proposal to assigned Grants Administrator if it was not submitted by OSP
- d. PI submits full proposal documents to Academic Unit Grants Administrator for Department review in accordance the College/Academic Unit policies proposal timelines and in accordance with the University's 4-day internal deadline policy.
- e. OSP initiates an updated MFTRP review on the full proposal key personnel.
- f. OSP conducts internal review and submits a full proposal to Sponsor, unless Sponsor requires otherwise.